

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, ELAB, CI
SUBJ: CATHOLIC CHURCH OPENS HUMAN RIGHTS YEAR

1. ARCHBISHOP SILVA INAUGURATED THE CHILEAN CATHOLIC CHURCH'S HUMAN RIGHTS YEAR IN A SIMPLE CEREMONY APRIL 24. COMMEMORATING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF POPE JOHN XXIII'S "PACEM EN TERRIS" AND THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, THE CHURCH PROPOSES TO STAGE AT LEAST TWO SEMINARS AND AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM BEFORE YEAR END.

2. CARDINAL SILVA REVIEWED AT LENGTH THE DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF MAN AND THE STATE AS SET FORTH IN "PACEM EN TERRIS" AND CALLED FOR ALL CHILEANS OF GOOD WILL TO MEDITATE ABOUT, AND WORK TOWARD, THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS THE ENCYCLICAL ENNUMERATES. THE VICARIATE OF SOLIDARITY WILL SERVE AS THE COORDINATOR OF THE YEAR LONG PROGRAM.

3. VICARIATE DIRECTOR PRECHT, MET WITH THE PRESS AT A LUNCHEON BEFORE THE CEREMONY. "LA TERCERA" QUOTED HIM AS STATING THAT BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVANCE "HAS IMPROVED QUANTITATIVELY AND QUALITATIVELY". ACCORDING TO PRECHT'S DEPUTY (PRECHT IS OCCUPIED WITH THE
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LAST MINUTE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES), THE VICARIATE READILY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE QUANTITATIVE ASPECT HAS IMPROVED MARKEDLY AND IS ENCOURAGED BY SIGNS OF QUALITATIVE PROGRESS. PRECHT WAS ANNOYED WITH THE NEWS ARTICLE, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF HIS BELIEF THAT THE REPORTER WOULD HAVE STRESSED HIS STATEMENTS ABOUT THE CONTINUING PROBLEM OF THOSE WHO DISAPPEARED IN THE PAST AND

THE ISSUE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUITY WHICH IS AT THE HEART OF
"PACEM EN TERRIS".

4. COMMENT: IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE CHURCH WILL INCREASINGLY
EMPHASIZE CIVIC AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS, A REFLECTION OF THE DECLINING
BASIC RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. EVEN AS HEDGED BY
SUBSEQUENT CLARIFICATION, THE VICARIATE LEADERSHIP
ACKNOWLEDGES THE ENCOURAGING REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER AND
SERIOUSNESS OF BASIC RIGHTS ABUSES.
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